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BOOK REVIEWS



A COMPLETE SYSTEM OF NURSING. Edited by Honnor Morten. Sampson Low, Marston & Co., London.

This is a book arranged on the plan of "A Complete System of Medicine," etc.,—that is, the articles dealing with different branches of nursing are written by different people, both nurses and physicians, all of whom are doubtless reliable authorities and among whom we notice some well-known names, including two American nurses. The editor wished that the volume should be small enough for the nurse to carry it, and it is of convenient size, with fairly good type.

The articles cover a great variety of subjects, including massage and electricity, mental nursing, district, private, and infirmary nursing, and sick-room cookery. They are, as a whole, practical and good as reference or aids to memory, while necessarily so condensed as to be rather imperfect as instruction.

Much of the teaching given, also, while compact, is of an extremely elementary order, as if intended for women who needed the very a, b, and c of practical work, and, with the detailed and careful instruction given to-day in most training-schools, seems rather out-of-date,—such, for instance, as the "Hints to Nurses on Urine Testing," on page 81.

The chapters on district and infirmary nursing are interesting and give a good outline of the history of these reform movements, the latter work owing much to Agnes Jones, Miss Louisa Twining, and Miss Wilson. D.

FOR RECREATION READING

THE mass of books which somewhat swamped the fiction market in the early holiday-time gave a promise of good reading which has hardly been fulfilled. How few of these many books are really able to hold one's attention from cover to cover. We look back over the list,—shuddering at the name of the "House with the Green Shutters," smiling a grateful remembrance of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," then on and on, a long, long list of unmitigated boredom,—and we sigh for the novels in the days that have been. To pick out one or two that have almost had the power to charm: There is, perhaps first, "The Fortunes of Oliver Horn." Now, with all due respect to Mr. F. Hopkinson Smith, it is a poor sort of a book, and yet it has certain pleasing qualities which go a good way towards redeeming its bad ones. I remember in my nursery days a certain patch-work quilt made by some thrifty individual out of the left-over scraps and patches from the summer wardrobe of a family of little girls, who found unending interest in identifying the morsels of print and calico—waking up early in the morning to search through the intricacies of the "log-cabin" pattern for bits like Susan's pinny or Margaret's frock, as it might happen. So with the "Fortunes of Oliver Horn:" there are endless little rag-tags of interest to New Yorkers that make some of us almost love the book. Who else has put into a novel our George Washington as he sits astride his eternally prancing charger, eternally threatening to ride into Union Square. Or turn the pages: here is John Gilbert

in a cellar at Thirteenth Street and Broadway eating steamed clams with an iron fork out of a washtub! Miss Teetum's boarding-house, which, more's the pity, still exists, has moved from Union Square; moreover, Miss Teetum has multiplied herself by some thousands, and now keeps incognito, so to speak, though you find her out all too soon. For a fact, I feel that she has been mistress of several houses where I have meekly paid my ten dollars per week for the privilege of being most uncomfortable. Then there is the dear, distressing old factor, the mortgage, the Civil War, the Southern family pride, a whole school of N. A.'s in embryo, and, of course, there is love enough for the size of the book—a nice, sensible sort of love, however, that grows fonder on doughnuts, apples, and elderberry pie. The women in the book are like none that have lived in our time, and the men are just a bit off the ordinary as well; but, then, real folks don't always appear in books. On the whole, you may do worse than read "Oliver Horn," and it goes better read aloud.

Quite a different book, yet also to be recommended for reading aloud, is "The House Divided," by H. B. Marriott Watson. The book begins with the landing of a young man from Vermont in England on a day of bitter gray fog, as though his guardian angel would shut away from his eyes till the last inevitable instant the sight of that new land to which he was bringing so much of youth and strength and courage—to spill them all uselessly and with terrible waste. The story tells in the most delicate and careful way how our young Vermonter ran the gauntlet of that dissolute life in the time of George II.,—time of wanton young women and wicked old women, of drunken, roistering men; how one woman came near to ruining his life, and another saved him; how through all the passion of his love-affairs he never turns aside from the purpose for which he crossed the seas—to take from a usurper, as he believes, his own inherited rights. There is all through the book the clang of swords, the taking of life for a careless word, and before the good ship *White Rose* of Boston has started on her return trip the tragic—fearfully tragic—end comes. One can't complain of lacking interest in this book, and the plot, though very simple, is well carried—it is a very well made piece of fiction and, moreover, it gives one a feeling of devout gratitude that *those* days are gone.

M. E. C.



THE CARE OF THE INSANE.—Dr. Charles G. Wagner, of Binghamton, read this paper at the annual meeting of the Medical Society of the State of New York. He compared the old régime with the modern one, and showed the beneficent results of the earnest and persistent preaching of the gospel of non-restraint. The hospital for the insane of to-day instead of being like a prison was more like a thriving town. The fundamental principle of the new treatment was the greatest personal liberty consistent with safety. Occupation was the keynote of the care and treatment after the acute stage had once passed, and by such means the germ of hope was implanted where before was nought but despair. The acute cases should be carefully examined, the causes of the mental disturbance ascertained and noted, and then rest and quiet enjoined together with the most nourishing diet. A skilful and tactful nurse could often persuade those patients to take the requisite amount of nourishment. It would often be found that ten or twelve eggs a day would prove a useful addition to the diet.